

index for hospital and related services. I believe the measure I am offering will create a vastly improved funding system that better responds to the needs of our veterans.

Last week the President's Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery For Our Nation's Veterans issued its final report. In it, the "growing mismatch between funding and demand" is repeatedly referenced. To address this problem, the report recommended: The Federal Government should provide full funding to ensure that enrolled veterans in Priority Groups 1 through 7 (new) are provided the current comprehensive benefit in accordance with VA's established access standards. Full funding should occur through modifications to the current budget and appropriations process, by using a mandatory funding mechanism, or by some other changes in the process that achieve the desired goal. (p. 77)

In addition, the Task Force addressed the need to clarify standards of access for Priority 8 veterans. Priority 8 veterans are the so-called "high-income" veterans without compensable service-connected conditions. Who are these individuals? Anyone with an income level of more than the geographically adjusted Housing and Urban Development threshold for low-income housing is considered "high income". In some communities, this means veterans with incomes of more than \$24,644—most often work-a-day folks who sometimes have to choose between prescription drugs and heat or groceries. My bill would cover these veterans.

Some will say that we've done well by our veterans this year. I would say it might well have gone the other way. This body passed a budget resolution that would have required us to cut veterans benefits during a period of war. It still remains unclear how veterans' health care will fare when pitted against such disparate programs as low-income housing, the space program and other independent agencies. Other health programs such as Medicare and TRICARE for Life are not subject to the same types of considerations because funding for these programs is based on need.

The result of this funding process is the "growing mismatch" addressed by the President's task force—the system is starving! We all have heard the numbers of veterans who have waited more than six months for health care services. There were more than 200,000 veterans in the queue at the beginning of the year. Even with increases proposed in the joint budget resolution, VA will still impose some regulatory constraints on access and has identified more than a billion in illusory "management efficiencies."

Last year, I cosponsored H.R. 5250, the "Veterans Health Care Funding Guarantee Act of 2002" with 129 other members of the House. The bill I am offering today closely resembles that legislation. The Congressional Budget Office slapped a hefty price tag on H.R. 5250 largely assuming huge increases in demand would result if the veterans' health care system were adequately funded! Think about this—our budget office assumes that our health care system for veterans is so fiscally deprived that a fairer funding system that responds to changes in demand would create a run on health care!

Our veterans deserve better than a chronically underfunded health care system. I believe veterans—all veterans—have earned the right to access the health care system that

was created to serve their needs. The price we pay as a Nation for assuring timely access to high-quality health care services is small in relation to the price we have asked them to pay in securing our freedom.

I urge my colleagues to join me and the 72 other members of the House that believe this is the right thing to do for our veterans. Every major veterans service organization, including The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, and Veterans of Foreign Wars, has stated support for this bill. Join us in the fight to do the right thing for our veterans. Join me in cosponsoring the "Assured Funding for Veterans Health Care Act of 2003".

THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATIC CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATIONS HONOR
AMY B. DEAN

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, Mr. HONDA, Ms. LOFGREN, and myself, rise to honor Amy B. Dean, Chief Executive Officer of the South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council who is leaving the Bay Area to go back to her original home of Chicago. On June 7, 2003, Amy Dean will be participating in her final COPE Awards Banquet as CEO of the organization she has so ably led.

Through Amy Dean's leadership, the South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council has been extremely successful in working for living wage contracts for city workers, affordable housing requirements in new developments, and health insurance for every child in Santa Clara County. Amy Dean has been a tireless and passionate advocate for social justice and has helped to strengthen the labor movement, bringing dignity and hope to countless families, whether they are union or non-union workers. Amy Dean was the youngest person in the country to lead a large metropolitan labor council and the first woman to head a labor council as large as the South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council. She founded Working Partnerships USA, a non-profit organization dedicated to rebuilding the links between regional economic policy and community well-being. She will continue her advocacy for community-centered economic development through Working Partnerships in Chicago. She has been widely recognized for her many accomplishments, has served on many committees and advisory boards and has written extensively on labor issues.

Mr. Speaker, we ask our colleagues to join us in honoring Amy B. Dean for her extraordinary service to our community as an ardent advocate for working women and men and their families.

A TRIBUTE TO OLUYEMI O.
BADERO, MD., FACC

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Dr. Oluyemi O. Badero, in recognition of his outstanding accomplishments in the field of medicine.

Dr. Badero was born in Nigeria. Four years after completing medical school in Nigeria, he came to the United States in 1988. Dr. Badero, who is a U.S. citizen, received his internship and residency training in internal medicine at SUNY Downstate-Kings County Hospitals in Brooklyn, New York where he also served as chief resident, a prestigious position.

He completed three separate fellowship training programs in critical care medicine, cardiovascular disease and interventional cardiology, the latter at the Yale University Program in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Dr. Badero is board certified in internal medicine, cardiovascular disease and interventional cardiology. He is one of a very few African-American specialists in his field. In fact in February 2003, The Network Journal, named Dr. Badero as one of the top black doctors for cardiology based on his experience, expertise and bedside manner.

Having completed an unprecedented nine consecutive years of post-graduate training, Dr. Badero is a highly regarded expert in cardiology. He is a fellow of the American College of Cardiology and an active member of several other professional organizations.

Dr. Badero has been widely published on a wide range of medical topics and has won numerous awards for his accomplishments. He currently serves as the Associate Chief of Cardiology and Associate Director of Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory at Interfaith Medical Center, the Director of the Cardiology Clinic at Kings County Hospital, director of Cardiac Screening Clinic and Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine at SUNY Health Science Center. All of these medical institutions are located in Brooklyn, New York.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Oluyemi O. Badero has reached the highest levels of medicine in our country, all the way from Nigeria, and he has used his expertise to improve the lives of his community. As such, he is more than worthy of receiving our recognition today and I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring this truly remarkable person.

A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING
CASSIE SHAW

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, whereas, Cassie Shaw has devoted herself to serving others through her membership in the Girl Scouts; and

Whereas, Cassie Shaw has shared her time and talent with the community in which she resides; and

Whereas, Cassie Shaw has demonstrated a commitment to meet challenges with enthusiasm, confidence and outstanding service; and

Whereas, Cassie Shaw must be commended for the hard work and dedication she put forth in earning the Girl Scout Gold Award;

Therefore, I join with the Girl Scouts, the residents of Kingston and the entire 18th Congressional District in congratulating Cassie Shaw as she receives the Girl Scout Gold Award.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT
AUTHORIZING CONGRESS TO
PROHIBIT PHYSICAL DESECRATION
OF THE FLAG OF THE
UNITED STATES

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.J. Res. 4, the proposed amendment to the Constitution to prohibit the physical desecration of the United States flag. I respect our flag, what it stands for, and personally deplore acts of desecration against the flag. However, I believe that our commitment to respecting our flag while preserving our fundamental freedoms, as symbolized by our flag and embodied in the Constitution and Bill of Rights, can be met without amending the Constitution.

Many Members of Congress see continued tension between "free speech" decisions of the Supreme Court, which protect flag desecration as an expression of first amendment speech, and the symbolic significance of the United States flag. Consequently, every Congress that has convened since those decisions were issued has considered possible measures to permit the punishment of those who engage in flag desecration. However, the amendment offered today by the majority would diminish the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of expression, one of our most fundamental guarantees of the Bill of Rights.

Amending the U.S. Constitution is necessarily and understandably a rigorous task. To become the law of the land, the flag desecration amendment would have to get the approval of two-thirds of both chambers of Congress and then be ratified by three quarters of the state legislatures. The fact that only 27 amendments, including the Bill of Rights, the civil rights amendments, and women's suffrage, have been made to the Constitution in the past 200 years illuminates the infrequency of such legislative initiatives. Moreover, since its ratification in 1791, the Bill of Rights has not been altered in any manner. Consequently, I believe that passage of such an amendment would set a dangerous precedent for further erosion of our constitutional rights and freedoms.

Not only is amending the Constitution a task that must not be taken lightly, we must be absolutely sure that it is necessary. In this case, I am not convinced that the requisite level of necessity has been met. For example, flag burning is an exceedingly rare occurrence—since the Supreme Court's free speech, flag desecration decisions, fewer than 10 flag

burning incidents have been reported each year.

Considering this, I believe that amending the Constitution to address the shameful conduct of such a minute portion of our general populace is simply unnecessary. This conviction is generally supported by a letter sent to Senator PATRICK LEAHY in May 1999, in which General Colin Powell, now Secretary of State, wrote that "The First Amendment exists to insure that freedom of speech and expression applies not just to that with which we agree or disagree, but also that which we find outrageous. I would not amend that great shield of democracy to hammer a few miscreants. The flag will be flying proudly long after they have slunk away." Secretary Powell, one of our most noted patriots and war heroes, obviously believes that diminishing our First Amendment rights is not the solution to the perceived problem at hand.

Taking into account the infrequency of flag desecration, as noted by Secretary of State Powell, I question today what it is that we are trying to regulate: is it the act of physical desecration itself or rather the sentiment behind the action? I believe that H.J. Res. 4 would affectively and severely abridge our rights of free expression. As such, I will oppose passage of this proposed constitutional amendment.

TRIBUTE TO MR. JACOB HOFFMAN

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a respected member of the Philadelphia community. Mr. Jacob Hoffman is turning 100 years young.

Mr. Hoffman, a resident of Brith Shalom House, will celebrate his 100th birthday this July 2, 2003. A retired real estate broker and developer, Mr. Hoffman is well regarded in the real estate community. He served on the Philadelphia Board of Realtors and was a founder of the south Philadelphia Realty Board in 1929.

Mr. Hoffman has remained very active in Jewish circles. He received a citation for being a member of B'nai B'rith for over 50 years. He is the oldest board member of Har Zion Temple and is also a member of the Lions Club.

Along with his two daughters, three grandchildren, and two great grandchildren, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in congratulating Mr. Jacob Hoffman during his 100th birthday celebration.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, June 5, 2003 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

JUNE 6

9:30 a.m.

Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Eduardo Aguirre, Jr., of Texas, to be Director of the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security.

SD-226

10 a.m.

Finance

To hold hearings to examine issues related to strengthening and improving Medicare.

SD-215

JUNE 10

9:30 a.m.

Armed Services

To hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence programs.

S-407, Capitol

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine reauthorization of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

SR-253

Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine castaway children, focusing on whether parents must relinquish custody in order to secure mental health services for their children.

SD-342

10 a.m.

Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the reauthorization of the Federal Public Transportation Assistance Program.

SD-538

Environment and Public Works

Fisheries, Wildlife, and Water Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine the current regulatory and legal status of federal jurisdiction of navigable waters under the Clean Water Act, focusing on issues raised by the Supreme Court in *Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* No. 99-1178.

SD-406

2 p.m.

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

To hold hearings to examine internally displaced persons in the Caucasus Region and Southeastern Anatolia.

334, Cannon Building

2:30 p.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

National Parks Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine S. 499, to authorize the American Battle Monuments Commission to establish in the State of Louisiana a memorial to honor the Buffalo Soldiers, S. 546, to provide for the protection of paleontological resources on Federal lands, S. 643, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior, in cooperation with the University of New Mexico, to construct